

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
POLICE OFFICER GENDER AND THE USE OF FORCE

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| I. ABSTRACT..... | 1 |
| II. INTRODUCTION..... | 3 |
| III. THE FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM..... | 5 |
| IV. THE STUDY POPULATION..... | 10 |
| V. SOURCES OF DATA..... | 11 |
| 1. The Daily Assignment Schedule..... | 11 |
| 2. Log of Arrests..... | 15 |
| 3. Police Incident Reports..... | 16 |
| 4. Ombudsman's Complaints..... | 19 |
| VI. DATA RESULTS..... | 23 |
| 1. Patrol Assignment by Officer Gender..... | 23 |
| A. Table 1, Gender Assignment Combinations..... | 25 |
| 2. Arrests by Officer Gender..... | 28 |
| A. Table 2, Arrests by Officer Gender..... | 30 |
| 3. Incident Involvement by Officer Gender..... | 37 |
| A. Table 3, Incidents & Officer Gender by Number of Incidents..... | 38 |
| B. Table 4, Incidents & Officer Gender by Number of Officers..... | 39 |
| C. Table 5, Incidents & Patrol Units..... | 41 |
| VII. SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION..... | 43 |
| VIII. CONCLUSIONS..... | 53 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|------|
| APPENDIX A The Assignment of Policewomen by Shift and Sector in 1990..... | 58 |
| APPENDIX B Police Incidents Reported During 1990..... | 60 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 62 |

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare policewomen and policemen regarding the frequency of their involvement in the use of force when arresting citizens. The results of studies conducted in the 1970s, at the beginning of the widespread employment of female patrol officers, suggest that female officers have a calming effect on emotionally upset citizens. These earlier studies indicate that policewomen, unlike policemen, evoke a different response from the citizens with whom they interact. Based on these findings, it is hypothesized that female officers should be less frequently involved, than are male officers, in instances of using force to make arrests. This current study compares the rate of incidents for the male and female patrol officers of a medium size municipal police department. As hypothesized, the results of this study show that female officers, when working alone or with another female partner, are less frequently involved in incidents of using force, than are their male colleagues. However, this study also found that when female officers are assigned with male partners, these mixed gender patrol teams experience a frequency of involvement in the use of force that greatly exceeds that of either the male/male or the female/female gender combinations. Similarly, this study indicates that the rate of arrests made by the male/female officer combination surpasses by a large margin the arrest rates of the male/male patrol combination, as well as that of the

female/female patrol combination. It is suggested that the results of this study may initiate some interest in conducting more conclusive research on this topic. Increasing our knowledge of how police behavior is influenced by the dynamics and cultural expectations of male and female sex roles has implications for police professionalism and police-community relations.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1968 when policewomen were first integrated into police departments in a patrol capacity, numerous studies have been conducted to evaluate their effectiveness. Most of these studies have indicated that women perform patrol work equally as well as their male counterparts. While women generally possess less upper body strength than men, there are indications suggesting that the job of patrol officer is largely a sedentary occupation.¹ Some differences however, between the men and the women were observed during these studies. The women were reported to be more effective than men in defusing potentially violent situations.² Citizens reported that policewomen handled service calls, especially domestic fights, better than policemen.³ A review of the literature suggests that policewomen tend to evoke a different response than policemen when handling situations involving hot-tempered citizens. Women reportedly have a "gentling effect" seldom manifested by male officers.⁴ One psychologist explains

¹ Michael T. Charles, "Women in Policing: The Physical Aspect," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 10, no. 2 (1982): 196.

² Peter Bloch and Deborah Anderson, Policewomen on Patrol: The Final Report, (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1974b), 3.

³ Lewis J. Sherman, "Evaluation of Policewomen on Patrol in a Suburban Police Department," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 3, no. 5 (1975): 436-437.

⁴ Lewis J. Sherman, "A Psychological View of Women in Policing," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 1, no. 4 (1973): 388.

that the basis for this phenomenon is inherent in the different expectations that people have for policemen and women.

The calming effect has been inconsistent with the image of police as rugged, rough, and masculine. This image has constantly been reinforced by the media. Subsequently, citizens have been conditioned to expect violence from police officers. This expectation may cause police officers to behave in ways that produce the expected events. Femininity on the other hand, has been associated with sympathy, understanding and warmth. Women have been expected to be less aggressive, violent and harsh than men. Therefore, it has been reasonable to assume that women officers would arouse less antagonism, fear, and violence than their male counterparts.⁵

The notion that policewomen are more adept at handling situations involving potentially violent citizens because of their calming influence, suggests that there should be a tendency for women police officers to be involved less frequently than male police officers in citizen complaints of physical abuse and the use of force in effecting arrests.

⁵ Lewis J. Sherman, "A Psychological View of Women in Policing," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 1, no. 4 (1973): 391-392.

FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Although policewomen have been working in a patrol capacity in most urban police departments for nearly two decades there is still some opposition to their acceptance by some fellow male officers and administrators. "The view of most police executives in the United States is that women, for the most part, do not belong on patrol because of their lack of strength and their inability to maintain an authoritarian presence in the face of challenges that the public can present to police officers."⁶ Although laws prohibit overt discrimination against women applicants and employees, the negative attitudes regarding female police officers that still persist among some males can only impede the progress that women are making toward complete integration into policing. Therefore any new information that is obtained from studies concerning the performance of policewomen will contribute to the developing body of knowledge on this still controversial subject.

Further, if the study does show a relationship between gender and the frequency with which allegations of abuse are made against officers, this may suggest some changes in the selection of police officer candidates, and in police officer training. For example if the results of this study support the findings of previous research, that policewomen tend to be more effective than men in avoiding violence by

⁶ Sean A. Grennan, "Findings on the Role of Officer Gender in Violent Encounters with Citizens," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 15, no. 1, (1987): 78.

defusing potentially violent situations,⁷ then those attributes that allow them to accomplish this need to be examined. Defining these attributes may help to re-evaluate the job-relatedness of criteria used in the psychological screening process of police officer applicants. Also analysis of the social dynamics of these encounters between policewomen and citizens may indicate a need for greater emphasis on human relations skills and conflict resolution skills in police training curriculums.⁸

Finally, for the reasons briefly outlined above, police administrators will be interested in acquiring the additional knowledge that this type of research provides. Because police administrators are responsible for the selection, training and discipline of their police officers, they are also held liable for their officers' negligence and misconduct while on duty. Police administrators because of vicarious liability⁹ are subject to also being named in lawsuits filed against their officers for negligence and

⁷ Peter Bloch and Deborah Anderson, Policewomen on Patrol: The Final Report (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1974b).

⁸ John Nicoletti, "Training for De-escalation of Force," The Police Chief, Vol. 57, no. 7 (July 1990): 38.

⁹ In tort law the doctrine of respondeat superior holds that "the master is held liable for the torts of his servants committed within the course of their employment. In the typical case the neglect is only that of the servant, the master is himself without fault. But because the servant is engaged in the master's work and is doing it in the place of, or for, the master, the act of the servant is regarded as the act of the master. Responsibility devolves up through the relationship to the master, and the question of proximate cause of the injury relates only to the act (or neglect) of the servant." Fernelius v. Pierce, 138 P2d 12 (Cal. 1943).

abuse of police powers. It is obviously in the self interests of police administrators to minimize the chance of incurring liability by making the best use of available knowledge. Such knowledge can assist them to properly select and train employees who will successfully perform their duties with greater emphasis on human relations skills, and with less reliance on using physical force. This will not only lead to fewer citizen complaints and lawsuits, but greater citizen respect for and cooperation with police departments.¹⁰

The research findings that suggest women officers are more adept than male officers at calming emotionally upset persons were generally produced in a period which represents the early stages of widespread involvement of women in the patrol function. Even if the early research findings were valid, has there been any change after two decades of women police officers working the street? Is there presently any difference in the response that male officers and female officers evoke from citizens? The primary question this study seeks to answer is whether or not policewomen have a greater propensity than male officers to evoke responses from citizens which defuse emotional situations and calm irate individuals. This study relies on a major assumption that the ability to defuse emotional people and situations translates into the successful performance of patrol duties

¹⁰ George F. Cole, Criminal Justice: Law and Politics (Monterey, California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1984), 71-72.

with less frequent use of physical force to accomplish the officer's objectives. The central premise is that by using human relations and verbal/negotiating skills, officers can in many instances make arrests without incident and peacefully resolve disputes by mediation.¹¹ Conversely an officer's demeanor and attitude can also evoke or provoke a negative or inimical response from the person he or she is arresting or from the persons whose dispute the officer is called upon to settle.

This study seeks to determine whether officer gender makes a difference in the response that police officers evoke from citizens. The premise of this research is that the number of incidents or complaints of police using physical force in their encounters with citizens and in making arrests, is inversely related to the officer's ability to defuse and calm persons whom they are arresting or interacting with. That is, the less disposed police are to employing non-physical tactics such as verbal/negotiating skills to help manage situations involving individuals with hostile attitudes, the greater the frequency that police will rely on the use of physical force to manage such situations. Increased reliance on physical force enhances the chances for abuse.

Because it is assumed female officers place less emphasis on the physical aspects of policing and more emphasis on non-physical tactics to resolve confrontational

¹¹ John Nicoletti, "Training for De-escalation of Force," The Police Chief, Vol. 57, no. 7 (July 1990): 38.

situations,¹² it is anticipated that the data will show that female police officers are involved less frequently in the use of force, and have fewer complaints of abuse made against them compared with their male counterparts, thus supporting the contention that female officers exhibit a greater calming effect on citizens than male officers do.

This study analyzes data collected from "Incident Reports" and "Ombudsman complaints" at the Flint Police Department, Flint, Michigan, a medium sized municipal police department. These Incident Reports are required to be completed by police officers whenever they encounter a resistive arrest, and some degree of force is used to effect the arrest. The Ombudsman complaints are filed by citizens alleging misconduct or abuse by police officers. By comparing the percentage of these "incidents" that involve policewomen and the percentage that involve policemen, with the percentage of the police patrol force that each gender comprises, a comparison of the rates of incidents involving the use of force is obtained for male and female officers. Within the limitations set by a relatively small sample group, this study proposes to determine if there is a relationship between police officer gender and the frequency with which these incidents involving the use of physical force occur.

¹² Michael T. Charles, "The Performance and Socialization of Female Recruits in the Michigan State Police Training Academy," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 9, no. 2 (1981): 220.

THE STUDY POPULATION

This study examined the Flint Police Department from January 1, 1990 to December 31, 1990. Flint, Michigan has a population of 140,000 inhabitants, with a black and white racial mixture of 50/50. The predominate industry is automobile manufacturing. The Flint Police Department has a total of 306 sworn police employees of whom 43 are women. Nearly a third of the department is comprised of minority black and Hispanic personnel. The police department is divided into the Patrol Division, Criminal Investigation Division, and the Staff Services Division.

The Patrol Division is the largest unit within the police department, and its officers have the most frequent and visible contact with citizenry. Since the majority of arrests are made by patrol officers, they are necessarily involved in a large portion of the incidents involving resistive arrests and the use of force. Also there is controversy regarding the issue of women performing patrol duties which traditionally have been considered an exclusively male role. Because of these factors this study focuses on the male and female police employees who are working in uniform and are performing traditional patrol duties. Administrative and investigative personnel are intentionally excluded from the study population. The subjects of this study are the 140 uniformed officers assigned to the Patrol Division, 23 of whom are women.¹³

¹³ The Monthly Patrol Schedule, Flint Police Department, January 1990.

SOURCES OF DATA

The period of January 1, 1990 to December 31, 1990 is the time frame for the data used in this study. There are four primary sources of data which are used; the Flint Police Daily Patrol Assignment Schedules, Flint Police Incident Reports, Flint Ombudsmans complaints of police abuse, and the Flint Police Log of Arrests.

The Daily Patrol Assignment Schedule

The Daily Patrol Assignment Schedule is a list of the police officers on each of the three shifts in the Patrol Bureau. The daily schedule indicates the district or beat assignment of each officer working on a particular shift on a particular day. Each day the lieutenant in charge of each shift makes out the daily assignment of his/her officers. This is done by referring to the Monthly Patrol Schedule which specifies each officer's assignment of patrol district, working days, and days off. While the Monthly Patrol Schedule gives a general indication of officers' assignments, the Daily Patrol Schedule provides information on the officers' actual day to day assignments. Irregularities, such as officers calling in sick, taking leave days, and attending training sessions, as well as the fact that several times a month all three partners assigned to a district are present on the same day, (which necessitates one of the partners being given an alternate assignment) cause deviations from the Monthly Patrol

Schedule. Because of these unpredictable changes in actual daily assignments, the Monthly Patrol Schedule is a less reliable source of assignment information. However by examining the data provided in the Daily Patrol Schedules, one can accurately determine the actual assignments of the officers for each of the days examined. The Daily Patrol Assignment Schedules are filed in the Patrol Bureau secretary's office.

Data provided by Daily Patrol Assignment Schedules identify the officers and their district assignments on a daily basis during the year of this study. These data are useful for distinguishing the proportion of assignments in which women are paired with men, paired with another woman, or assigned to work solo. For the purposes of this study, merely determining the overall proportion of women in patrol is not sufficient. The influence that a male officer has on the behavior of his female partner and vice versa necessitates that the proportion of female officers assigned to all female assignments and the proportion assigned to male-female assignments be determined. It is essential that the proportional distribution of women among the gender assignment combinations be considered in order to accurately assess the involvement of policewomen in incidents.

The Daily Patrol Assignment Schedule provides additional useful data by identifying districts and shifts to which officers are assigned. While the utility of these data are less apparent, they can be significant in

accounting for anomalies in arrest data. Consider for example, a situation where female officers are disproportionately assigned to a particular shift or to a particular geographical area of the city. These factors could influence the number of arrests made by female officers and hence the number of incidents in which female officers are involved. This is because the frequency and types of crime reported, and necessarily the calls for police service, are not evenly distributed throughout the entire city, nor are they evenly distributed throughout a 24 hour period. Certain periods of the day produce a greater number of calls for police service than do other times. Also the nature of the calls for police service may vary in relationship to the time of day.¹⁴ Certain calls for police service by their very nature have a greater likelihood of eliciting police use of force and subsequent citizens' complaints of police abuse. For example, the use of force increases with the intoxication of the citizen, probably due in part to greater resistance to the police by the inebriated.¹⁵ If the assignments that female officers were routinely given tended to substantially reduce their chance of encountering intoxicated citizens (ie. assignment to the "day shift" or low crime neighborhoods), then their

¹⁴ Samuel Walker, The Police in America: An Introduction (New York: McGraw-Hill Series in Criminology and Criminal Justice, 1983), 105.

¹⁵ Albert J. Reiss, Jr., "Police Brutality-Answers to Key Questions," Trans-Action, (July-August 1968), 18.

assignment could be a factor relevant to the number of incidents in which they are involved.

Information contained in the Daily Patrol Assignment Schedules is used to summarize the proportions of "all female," "all male," and "male/female" assignment combinations for each of the four quarters in the study period. These proportions are used as a point of reference in making comparisons with the proportions of arrests made by each gender assignment combination, and with the proportions of incidents involving each gender assignment combination.

To obtain the assignment by gender percentages, data from the Daily Patrol Assignment Schedules are first tallied to determine the total number of officers assigned to each shift on each day of each three-month quarter of 1990. Similarly, subtotal figures for the number of officers in each of the three gender combinations are calculated for the three shifts of each day of each quarter in 1990. The female subtotal consists of the number of female officers assigned alone or with another female. The male subtotal consists of the number of males who worked alone or with another male partner. The subtotal of the male-female gender category reflects the number of officers who worked in units with partners of the opposite sex.

Log of Arrests

An arrest log is maintained at the patrol desk in the main lobby of the Flint Police Headquarters. Each time a person is arrested, his or her name, age and address is entered into the log book by the arresting officer. Also included are the booking time, date, and offense, and the names of the officers making the arrest. The log book is made available to the public, and contains arrests for the current month. Previous months' logs of arrests are on file in the Records Bureau.

The information contained in the log of arrests provides a means of determining the types and numbers of arrests that are made by the female officers in comparison with those made by male officers. Knowing the proportion of arrests made by female officers is significant because of the correlation between arrests and incidents where force is used. Most incidents and allegations of physical abuse arise from situations involving the making of an arrest. Very few complaints of physical abuse occur outside of arrest situations. Accordingly, the more arrests an officer makes, the more opportunity that officer has to be involved in an incident. Conversely, making fewer arrests presents less opportunity for involvement. Therefore arrest data represent a relevant factor in this study to control for the influence that the proportion of arrests made by policewomen has on the frequency of their involvement in incidents. If policewomen are proportionately less involved than male

officers in the use of force, as suggested by earlier studies, then it is essential to examine the arrest data to determine if this phenomenon is simply a result of policewomen making proportionately fewer arrests.

The arrest log data is used to calculate the proportion of arrests made by all male, all female, and male/female gender assignment combinations. Using the information contained in the arrest log, each arrest made by Patrol Bureau officers in 1990 is counted, and the gender and gender assignment combination of the arresting officers is noted. From this information the proportion of arrests made by each of the gender assignment combinations is computed. The proportions of arrests by gender assignment combinations are summarized quarterly.

Police Incident Reports

When a Flint Police officer encounters resistance in making an arrest, and uses some degree of force to overcome that resistance, he/she is required to complete a police incident report. The degree of force used by an officer could range from merely restraining a resisting suspect with a defensive physical hold, to the use of lethal weapons to subdue an armed suspect. Additionally any officer who is a witness to such an arrest even though he/she did not actually participate in it, is also required to complete an incident report. Besides such pertinent data as names, times, dates, places, and a brief summary of what occurred,

the report requests additional information including the degree of force that was used, what instruments were used (ie. baton, mace, etc.), and what injuries if any were sustained by the person being arrested and by the police officers involved. Patrol Division Incident Reports are filed in the Patrol Captain's office.

Given the nature of this data as well as the self reporting aspect of it, there is concern that there may be a tendency for police officers to underreport incidents. Some police officers may be inclined to omit using the Incident Report to avoid additional paperwork, or to avoid bringing attention to a relatively minor incident of abuse that might otherwise go unnoticed. For the relatively few incidents in which officers omit leaving reports, the Ombudsmans Complaints provide a check and balance. When an Ombudsmans complaint is received by the police department, the officers involved must respond to the complaint by completing the necessary Incident Reports at that time.

Since the majority of incidents involve reasonable and necessary use of force, officers have an incentive to promptly report incidents because doing so affords them some protection from false allegations of abuse. It is not uncommon for those arrested to falsely accuse the arresting officers of misconduct.¹⁶ By promptly submitting an Incident Report the incident is immediately brought to the

¹⁶ N. F. Iannone, Supervision of Police Personnel (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 304-305.

supervisor's attention. The incident can be investigated by the supervisor shortly after it has occurred, and it can be immediately documented with interviews, photographs and other evidence. Immediately acknowledging and investigating an incident enhances the credibility of the police by providing evidence to support disciplinary or criminal action against an officer when warranted, as well as providing the police with a means to refute false or exaggerated complaints of police misconduct.

This study utilizes each incident reported in the Incident Reports as an indication that the arresting officers used physical force to some degree to manage a situation, as opposed to successfully handling the situation by using only verbal/negotiation skills. This study does not presume any a priori moral judgment about the use of force. Using force to manage an arrest does not necessarily preclude the possibility that the officers first attempted to resolve the situation with verbal/negotiation skills but the actions of the citizen made the use of force necessary. One should also bear in mind that police frequently encounter situations where it is necessary to use reasonable force to apprehend and subdue a violent or armed suspect. However there are also situations where the use of force is unwarranted and is an abuse of police power. In collecting and analyzing the data contained in the Incident Reports, no conclusion is drawn regarding the necessity or reasonableness of the force used, nor is there a

determination of the type and degree of force used in each incident. These issues are beyond the focus of this study. The concern of this study is that each incident reported potentially represents a situation where the officers did not have a "calming effect" on the individual they were interacting with. The officers perceived the individual's response to them as something other than calm and cooperative, thus prompting the officers to utilize some form of physical force or restraint to control the individual.

The data obtained from the Incident Reports provide this study with the total number of incidents reported during the calender year of 1990. Each of these incidents is examined to determine total number of officers involved, and the gender of each these officers, and the gender assignment combinations of these officers. The proportion of all male, all female, and male-female combinations involved in each incident is computed from this information. The results are summarized for each of the four quarters of 1990.

Ombudsman Complaints

Citizens complaints filed with the Ombudsmans office provide a record of incidences of alleged abuse by patrol officers. Those occurring between January 1, 1990 and December 31, 1990 were reviewed for this study. The Ombudsman's office is an agency whose responsibility is to

investigate complaints of official improprieties by the various City of Flint departments, including the Police Department, and to issue recommendations based on the results of its investigations. The Flint Ombudsman's office was created by the City of Flint Charter, and is designed to be relatively independent of the politics of Flint's "strong mayor" type of city government. It is authorized to objectively inquire into the merits of any citizen's grievance about official actions or failures to act by employees and departments of Flint city government. The independence of the Ombudsman's Office presumably allows it to be uninhibited by administration political pressure, and uncompromising in its investigations.

When citizens file complaints of police misconduct with the Ombudsman's Office, the Ombudsman's investigator interviews the complainant. During this initial interview the investigator attempts to determine when and where the alleged misconduct occurred and the circumstances surrounding the allegation, as well as the names of the police officers involved. The investigator then sends a notice of the citizen's complaint to the Police Department along with a request for a written response from the Department. The Ombudsman's request asks the Department to identify the officers involved and to have them present their explanation of the incident that resulted in the citizen's complaint. The officers in question submit their written reports through the Chief of Police to the

Ombudsman's Office. Copies of the Ombudsman's request and the officers' responses are retained by the Police Department in the office of the commander of the bureau to which the officer about which the complaint was made is assigned.

Complaints to the Ombudsman and related police reports provide information on the gender of the officers involved in the alleged abuse, as well as the location, time, date, and nature of the incident, and whether or not the officers were responding to an assigned call or conducting an officer initiated field investigation when the incident occurred.

The Ombudsman complaints of abuse were examined to determine what proportion of the cases involve all male, all female, and male-female gender assignment combinations. The analysis of this data does not attempt to confirm whether or not the complaints are sustained. The reasons for this are the great difficulty in resolving whether or not the alleged misconduct occurred, and the difficulty in determining whether or not the actions of the officer in each individual case were reasonable and justified under the circumstances. The fact that a citizen makes a complaint of police abuse, recognizes at least that the citizen's perception of the police/citizen encounter is one in which the citizen was subjected to something other than the "gentling effect" of the police. Determining the final disposition of each abuse complaint is not within the scope of this study. Also, information on the disposition of each case is not critical

to determining if officer gender does make a difference in the response that police officers evoke from citizens.

The data contained in the Ombudsmans Complaints are used in this study to supplement the data contained in the Incident Reports. In collecting the data, care was taken to avoid double counting the same incident reported in both the Ombudsmans Complaints and the Incident Reports. Incidents reported in the Ombudsmans Complaint data are summarized together with the information in the Incident Report data.

DATA RESULTS

Patrol Assignment by Officer Gender

The data presented in the Table 1 illustrate the numbers and proportions of patrol officer assignments comprised of "all Male," "Male/Female" and "all Female" patrol units. This information provides a point of reference for comparison when evaluating the proportions of arrests and incidents in which each of the three gender assignment combinations is involved. The numbers listed in the table (p. 25) represent the number of patrol officer assignments in each gender assignment combination by quarter. Each officer assignment represents one officer working one eight-hour shift. For example, there are three shifts of eight hours each per day, and if each shift has 26 officers working, this is equivalent to 72 officer assignments per day, or 7020 officer assignments per ninety day quarter ($3 \times 26 \times 90 = 7020$).

It should be noted that the officer assignments presented in Table 1's data represent only traditional patrol "field" assignments, where the officers are assigned to "work the street" patrolling a specified beat or district. It is common practice in the Flint Police Department (as well as many other municipal police departments) to use a portion of the uniform patrol officers to staff some non-patrol administrative type assignments. These assignments which are commonly referred to in the

Flint Police Department as "Desk Assignments" are not included in the data presented in Table 1. These data were excluded because officers given desk assignments, such as radio dispatcher, Crime Prevention Officer, and desk officer, have little, if any, opportunity to make arrests or become involved in incidents. Therefore the data in Table 1, which include only field assignments, present a more accurate representation of the opportunities that each of the gender assignment combinations have for making arrests and becoming involved in incidents. The data contained in Table 1 provide the basis for comparing differences in arrest activity data and incident involvement data based on officer gender.

Regarding desk assignments, it is interesting to note that during 1990 the number of female officers assigned to desk assignments ranged from 5 to 7 each month (See Appendix A), which accounts for 21% to 30% of the total 23 female officers assigned to the Patrol Division. A comparable range for male officers is 8 to 10 officers assigned to desk assignments each month, or about 7% to 9% of the 117 male officers assigned to the Patrol Division. From these data it would appear that, compared with their male colleagues, a disproportionately greater share of the female patrol officers in the Flint Police Department are assigned to non-patrol administrative duties, instead of traditional patrol assignments. As previously discussed, this is a factor that affects the degree to which female officers become involved

in arrests and incidents, and therefore is an important consideration in this study.

TABLE 1

GENDER ASSIGNMENT COMBINATIONS (Table 1)

| Quarter | | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
|-------------|----|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| TOTAL | n= | 7230 | 6898 | 6682 | 5925 |
| | | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| MALE | n= | 5951 | 5786 | 5598 | 5008 |
| | | 82.3% | 83.9% | 83.8% | 84.5% |
| MALE/FEMALE | n= | 940 | 684 | 604 | 400 |
| | | 13.0% | 9.9% | 9.0% | 6.8% |
| FEMALE | n= | 339 | 428 | 480 | 517 |
| | | 4.7% | 6.2% | 7.2% | 8.7 |

An observation of the data in the above table discloses two trends. First, the total number of patrol officer assignments steadily declines from the first quarter through the fourth quarter, from 7230 to 5925. This reflects the attrition of patrol officers resulting from retirements,¹⁷ as well as seasonal fluctuations in manpower due to

¹⁷ With the exception of the voluntary departure of one female officer in the fourth quarter of 1990 (she became an FBI agent), all of the retirements from Patrol were male. Since female patrol officers were not hired by the Flint Police Department until 1974, none of them were eligible for retirement in 1990, having not yet attained the minimum twenty years service required for retirement.

vacations, and (in the fourth quarter) the transfer of several patrol officers (all of whom were male) out of patrol to a newly created unit to address the problem of juvenile gang violence.

Second, looking at the first through the fourth quarters of 1990, there appears to be an inverse relationship between the proportion of "Male/Female" and the proportion of "Female" gender assignment combinations. Throughout the year there is a continuous decline in the number of "Male/Female" assignments and a corresponding increase in the number of "all Female" assignments. Essentially, as the 1990 year progressed, the female officers were assigned with female partners and in solo units more often, and were assigned less frequently with male partners. A partial explanation for this trend may be that in the first quarter of 1990, several of the female officers were relatively new officers still on their first year probationary status. As such they were required to be assigned to work with designated training officers, most of whom were male. As the female "rookie" officers acquired more experience and finished their probationary training period, supervisors were no longer obligated to assign them with designated training partners. They were allowed more flexibility in assignments and choice of partners, such as assignments to one person cars and assignments with female partners.

Through each successive quarter of 1990, there is a slight nearly continuous increase in the proportion of "all Male" assignments, even though there is a continuous decline in the actual number of "all Male" assignments for the same period of time. The proportional increase in "all Male" assignments is explained by the proportional decrease in "Male/Female" assignments, in much the same way that it explained the proportional increase in "all Female" assignments. With fewer "Male/Female" assignments there are correspondingly more male officers available for "all Male" assignments. However, in the case of the "all Male" assignments, the proportional increase is not as dramatic as that of the "all Female" assignments. This is because male officers comprise a substantially greater proportion of the Patrol Bureau than female officers do and this acts to minimize the increase in two ways. First, the numbers of male officers assigned to "Male/Female" units represent a relatively small proportion of the total number of males in the Patrol Bureau, and thus any reassignment of their numbers to "all Male" assignments reflects a correspondingly slight degree of proportional change. Second, the proportional increase in "all Male" assignments anticipated by the reduction in the number of "Male/Female" assignments is largely countered by the decreasing number of "total" assignments in each successive quarter of 1990.

Arrests by Officer Gender

Information on the gender assignment combinations of the patrol officers making arrests during 1990 was gathered from the Flint Police arrest logs and is summarized by yearly quarters in Table 2 below. While collecting the data there were two issues that arose concerning how to properly assign credit for each of the arrests. These concerns and how they were addressed are described below.

During the collection of arrest data, occasionally it was noticed that several officers' names were listed as having made a particular arrest. This presented a minor problem for the study of how to credit such an arrest. If all of the officers listed were credited with the arrest, this could have the effect of skewing arrest data results to make it appear that male officers are responsible for a greater proportion of arrests than they actually are, merely because there are more male than female officers in the Flint Police Patrol Division. A decision was made to credit only the initiating officer or pair of officers with the arrest rather than include all of the additional backup officers present at the scene of the arrest. It was reasoned that since it is the initiating officers who have the first contact with the offender and make the decision to arrest, they should be the officers credited with the arrest. Therefore the additional arresting officers in backup units were intentionally deleted in tabulating the

arrest data. Only initiating pairs of arresting officers were assigned the credit for arrests.

In the course of collecting arrest data it was also noted that often times one arrested individual would be charged with more than one offense, each of which was listed as a separate arrest in the Arrest Log. For example a subject arrested for driving while intoxicated might also be found to be driving with a suspended license and to have an outstanding arrest warrant for another offense. Standard practice in the Flint Police Department is for the arresting officers to make three separate entries of the arrestee's name in the arrest log, one for each of the offenses he is charged with. For purposes of this study a decision was made to count each individual as only one arrest regardless of how many offenses he was booked for. It was reasoned that it is the encounter between the officers and the individual arrested, and not the total number of charged offenses resulting from an encounter, that provides the opportunity for an incident. Therefore the additional arrest charges generated from the initial arrest of an individual are not counted in this study, as they would tend to present a distorted and inflated picture of the officers' actual arrest activity. The figures presented in Table 2 represent the actual numbers of persons arrested by each of the gender assignment combinations of Patrol Division officers during 1990.

TABLE 2
ARRESTS BY OFFICER GENDER (Table 2)

| <u>Quarter</u> | | <u>1st</u> | <u>2nd</u> | <u>3rd</u> | <u>4th</u> |
|----------------|----|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| TOTAL ARRESTS | n= | 1485 | 1312 | 1565 | 1218 |
| MALE | n= | 1190 80.2% | 1053 80.3% | 1273 81.3% | 1006 82.6% |
| MALE/FEMALE | n= | 231 15.5% | 189 14.4% | 233 14.9% | 145 11.9% |
| FEMALE | n= | 64 4.3% | 70 5.3% | 59 3.8% | 67 5.5% |

In examining the data and percentages in Table 2, there are two trends that should be noted. First, except for an unexplained anomaly in the third quarter arrest total, there appears to be a pattern of decline in total number of arrests throughout the year that parallels the decrease in total number of officer assignments observed in Table 1. With the exception of the third quarter figure, which represents a 19% increase over the preceding quarter's arrests total, and is 28% higher than the fourth quarter's arrests total, and which occurred despite the reduction in patrol manpower occurring during the same period, there is a gradual decline in the number of arrests during each successive quarter of 1990. The research data did not disclose any pattern to suggest an explanation for the third quarter's dramatic increase in total arrests.

The third quarter arrest totals for arrests by "Male" officers and by "Male/Female" officers also showed the

highest totals for the year with 1273 (81.3%) and 233 (14.9%) arrests respectively. However, the third quarter arrest totals for "Female" officers were the lowest for the year with 59 arrests, and the lowest proportionately with 3.8% of the arrests. There is no readily apparent explanation for the dramatic decrease in "Female" arrest totals for the third quarter, despite the fact that during the third quarter the "Female" officer assignments were the second highest for the year at 480 assignments (7.2%), exceeded only by the fourth quarter's "Female" officer assignments at 517 (8.7%) as shown in Table 1.

Probably the most significant observations made from the arrest data are the facts that the "Male/Female" gender assignment combination consistently accounts for a much greater proportion of the arrests than their proportion of the patrol force; while the "Female" gender assignment combination accounts for a consistently smaller proportion of the arrests than their proportion of the patrol force. Comparing the data in Tables 1 and 2, the "Male/Female" gender assignment combination proportions for the four quarters are 13.0%, 9.9%, 9.0%, and 6.8% versus the respective arrest proportions of 15.5%, 14.4%, 14.9%, and 11.9%. Similarly the "Female" gender assignment combination shows proportions of 4.7%, 6.2%, 7.2%, and 8.7% for each quarter, with arrest proportions of 4.3%, 5.3%, 3.8%, and 5.5% respectively. The proportions of arrests made by the "Male" gender assignment combination (80.2%, 80.3%, 81.3%,

and 82.6%) are only slightly less than their gender assignment combination proportions (82.3%, 83.9%, 83.8%, and 84.5%).

Part of the explanation for the lower proportions of arrests by the "Male" and the "Female" gender assignment combinations compared with those proportions made by "Male/Female" combinations, lies in the fact that two person units tend to be assigned to the "higher crime" areas while one person units are more likely to be assigned to "lower crime" areas. The reasoning for this is that officers working in "higher crime" sectors are exposed to more situations requiring an arrest to be made. Providing these officers with a partner to assist them tends to make the officers safer and more effective when confronting violent offenders. For the same reason, two person patrol units tend to be dispatched more frequently, than are one person units, to calls the nature of which suggests that violence or an arrest is anticipated. The significance of this is not lost when we consider that the "Male" and the "Female" gender assignment combinations consist of "two person" as well as "one person" patrol units, whereas the "Male/Female" combination is obviously always a two person patrol unit. The fact that a significant number of the "Male" and the "Female" officer assignment combinations are one person patrol units, reduces the chances of these units being dispatched to the calls and of being assigned to the sectors where arrests are more likely to occur.

The data regarding shift and district assignments for female officers are also examined in an effort to understand why "Female" officer gender assignment combinations produced proportionately fewer arrests for their numbers. As previously discussed, these factors can influence the number of arrests made by female officers, and hence the number of incidents they are involved in. In observing the data contained in Appendix A, "The Assignment of Policewomen by Shift and Sector in 1990," it is evident that the assignment of female officers is not evenly distributed across all three shifts. The second shift averages about half as many female officers assigned to patrol duties as the first and third shifts do. The average numbers (for the year) of female officers assigned to the first, second and third shifts are 6.33, 3.6, and 6.6 respectively. Note that these averages are obtained by including only the officers assigned to the four patrol sectors and relief; the officers assigned to desk assignments are not counted. The fact that female officers are disproportionately underrepresented on the second shift patrol assignments may be a factor which accounts for their smaller proportion of arrest activity. The reasoning is that the majority of calls for police service occur during the second shift, that is the late afternoon to midnight hours. Officers assigned to the second shift confront with greater frequency problem situations that may necessitate the arrests of offenders to resolve them. Consequently being assigned to the day shift

or early morning shift exposes officers to relatively fewer calls for service, thereby reducing the frequency of their need to respond to situations that may require making an arrest and becoming involved in an incident.

In addition to this irregularity in shift assignments, it appears that female patrol officers have also not been evenly apportioned across all sectors of the city. The data in Appendix A indicates that there are some sectors, particularly during the first and second shifts, that consistently have relatively few female officers assigned to them, while other sectors regularly have a greater portion of the female officers assigned to them. As an example, Appendix A shows that during the entire year, the first shift and the second shift have a total of 13 female officers assigned to sector 2, while sector 3 has a total of 57 female officers assigned to it. When we combine all three shifts, the totals are 49 female officers assigned to sector 2, and 72 female officers assigned to sector 3. While this latter difference is not quite as dramatic as the one seen when examining the first and second shift totals alone, sector 3 still has 47% more female assignments than sector 2. It should be noted that sector 2 encompasses a large portion of the decaying inner city, while sector 3 comprises mostly blue collar and middle class neighborhoods. Without going into an ecological treatise on crime in the city of Flint, it should be recognized that the inner city environment of sector 2 is regarded as an area of "higher

crime" that places relatively greater demands on police services in terms of both the seriousness and frequency of calls compared with sector 3 which is considered an area of relatively "lower crime". Consequently officers who are assigned to sector 2 are likely to have more frequent exposure to situations resulting in arrests than they would if assigned to sector 3.

The way in which the assignments of female officers are skewed may at first glance, suggest that management has patronized female officers with "safe" assignments, and has given them "easy" assignments because they believe they are incapable of performing the difficult ones as well as males.¹⁸ Although some police administrators subscribe to this type of thinking, this may not necessarily be the reason for the way the assignments are distributed for the female patrol officers in the Flint Police Department. Because the sector assignments of individual officers are made by management, there is the possibility that such a prejudicial view has to some degree influenced supervisory and management decisions about which sectors female officers will be assigned to work in. While this is a significant question, resolving this issue is beyond the scope of this research.

Unlike sector assignments, shift assignments are the prerogative of the individual officers. The police

¹⁸ Susan Ehrlich Martin, Breaking and Entering--
Policewomen on Patrol (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980), 91.

officers' labor contract allows that once an officer has completed the training and one-year probation period, an officer's shift assignment is determined by the officer's preference, based upon each officer's departmental seniority.¹⁹ Subsequent to April 17, 1990, there were no female officers on one year probationary status during the remainder of the year.²⁰ All five of the female "rookie" officers had completed their training and probation by this date and were allowed shift preference as specified in the contract. Therefore, the fact that female officers are disproportionately underrepresented on the second shift during the last two quarters of 1990, should not be attributed solely to a decision by management.

Regardless of the reason for the uneven distribution of female officers by shift and by sector, it is a factor that has an impact upon the proportion of arrests that female officers make, and consequently upon their chances of becoming involved in incidences. The degree to which this factor impinges upon the arrest activity of female officers is a question that, because of the limitations of this study, is not completely resolved. Also it is not known to what extent other factors may be responsible for the lower arrest ratio of female officers. Other studies have suggested that female officers are less aggressive than their male counterparts, and this may be a factor which

¹⁹ Labor Contract between the Flint Police Officers Association and the City of Flint, 1989.

²⁰ Employee Seniority List, Chief's Office, Flint Police Department, Flint, MI, 1990.

influences the proportion of arrests that they make.²¹ However this same study also suggests that it is not clear whether women produce too few arrests or men produce too many.²² Some arrests may not be necessary or desirable. Police officers can provoke citizens into committing assaults. They also have the power to overlook minor offenses when, in their discretion, an arrest would be counterproductive.

Incident Involvement by Officer Gender

The Incident Reports (see Appendix B) and Ombudsman's complaints indicate that a total of 190 officers in the Patrol Bureau were involved in 75 separate incidences during 1990. While most incidents involved two officers working together in one unit, there were several incidents that each involved two or three patrol units, and one incident in which a single male officer patrol unit was involved. The straightforward presentation of incident data is complicated by the variety of combinations possible when examining the number of patrol units and gender combinations of officers assigned to these units who are involved in each incident. To simplify the presentation of the incident data, three different tables are displayed. Each table presents a different perspective on the incident data so as to convey a

²¹ Peter Bloch and Deborah Anderson, Policewomen on Patrol: The Final Report (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1974b), 22.

²² Peter Bloch and Deborah Anderson, Policewomen on Patrol: The Final Report (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1974b), 3.

more detailed picture of the relationship between officer gender and involvement in incidents. The three tables alternately define the incident data in terms of Incidents, Officers, and Patrol Units.

The data in Table 3 illustrate the number and proportion of incidents that involve officers in each of the three gender assignment combinations. For example, Table 3 illustrates that there were a total of 17 incidents which occurred during the first quarter. Twelve (70%) of those 17 incidents involved only "Male" officers, while five (30%) of the incidents involved a combination of "Male and Female" patrol officers working together. There were no (0%) incidents in which only "Female" officers were involved. Similarly, data for the second, third, and fourth quarters are also shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3

INCIDENTS & OFFICER GENDER BY NUMBER OF INCIDENTS

| <u>Quarter</u> | | <u>1st</u> | <u>2nd</u> | <u>3rd</u> | <u>4th</u> |
|----------------|----|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Incidents | n= | 17 | 14 | 29 | 15 |
| MALE | n= | 12 70% | 9 64% | 22 76% | 9 60% |
| MALE/FEMALE | n= | 5 30% | 5 36% | 7 24% | 3 20% |
| FEMALE | n= | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 3 20% |

In Table 4 the numbers and percentages of officers involved in incidents during each quarter of 1990, are categorized by the gender assignment combination of the officers involved in each incident. For example, Table 4

indicates that in the first quarter, there were a total of 47 officers involved in incidents. Of those 47 officers, 37 (79%) were involved in incidents in which all officers present were "Male", and 10 (21%) officers were involved in incidents in which both "Male and Female" officers were present. Table 4 also shows that in the first quarter there were no (0%) officers involved in incidents where only female officers were present.

Similarly the data for the remaining quarters of 1990 are displayed in the table.

TABLE 4

INCIDENTS & OFFICER GENDER BY NUMBER OF OFFICERS

| <u>Quarter</u> | | <u>1st</u> | <u>2nd</u> | <u>3rd</u> | <u>4th</u> |
|----------------|----|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Total Officers | n= | 47 | 32 | 78 | 33 |
| MALE | n= | 37 79% | 22 69% | 62 79% | 18 55% |
| MALE/FEMALE | n= | 10 21% | 10 31% | 16 21% | 8 24% |
| FEMALE | n= | 0 0% | 0 0% | 0 0% | 7 21% |

Table 5 looks at the total number of patrol units involved in incidents and arrays them according to their gender assignment combination. For example during the first quarter, there were a total of 24 patrol units involved in incidents. Nineteen (79%) of the units were "Male" teams, and 5 units were "Male/Female" teams. None of the units in the first quarter consisted of "Female" only patrol teams. The remaining three quarters of 1990 are similarly displayed

in Table 5. Note that in Table 5, some patrol unit numbers are followed by another number in parentheses. The number in parentheses indicates how many of the preceding number of patrol units consist of "one person" patrol units. For example in the fourth quarter, the "Female" category displays "5 (1)". This indicates that there are total of five units. Four of the units consist of pairs of female officers, and one unit contains a single female officer.

The distinction between Table 4 and Table 5 is that in Table 5, the data are in terms of patrol units. Each patrol unit is individually assigned to one of the three gender assignment combinations according to the gender of the officers in that unit. However in Table 4, the percentages are in terms of the officers involved in a given incident. All the officers involved in a particular incident are assigned to one of the three gender combinations based on gender combination of the total officers involved in that particular incident. So for example if an incident involved six male officers and one female officer, it would be categorized as "Male/Female" in Table 4. If all incidents involved only a single two person unit, either Table 4 or Table 5 alone would be sufficient to present the data. However because several incidents involve multiple patrol units, both Tables are used to summarize the incident data.

TABLE 5

INCIDENTS & PATROL UNITS

| Quarter | | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
|--------------|----|---------------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| Patrol Units | n= | 24 | 16 | 41 | 18 |
| MALE | n= | 19 (1) 79% | 11 69% | 33 (3) 80% | 11 (2) 61% |
| MALE/FEMALE | n= | 5 21% | 5 31% | 7 18% | 2 11% |
| FEMALE | n= | 0 0% | 0 0% | 1 (1) 2% | 5 (1) 28% |

The data presented in Tables 3, 4, and 5 show that the "Male" categories in each of the tables account for most of the incidents. There is little difference between the proportion of incidents and the proportion of the patrol assignments for "Males" during the first and third quarters. However there is a rather sharp contrast during the second and fourth quarters with the proportions of incidents (69% & 61%, Table 5) being considerably less than the comparable proportions of "Male" patrol assignments (83.9% & 84.5%, Table 1).

In comparison with their proportion of the patrol assignments (Table 1) the "Male/Female" category is involved in a disproportionately large proportion of the incidents that occur. For the second and third quarters, the proportion of incidents that "Male/Female" patrol units are involved in (31% & 18%, Table 5) is at least twice as great as their proportion of patrol assignments (9.9% & 9%, Table 1). This difference is even more pronounced when comparing

the "Male/Female" proportion of patrol assignments with the data in Tables 3 and 4. For each quarter the "Male/Female" share of incidents is also substantially greater than the proportion of arrests for which they are responsible.

Except for the fourth quarter, the "Female" gender assignment combination has a very limited involvement in incidents (0%, 0%, 0%, & 20%, Table 3). Three of the fifteen incidents occurring during the fourth quarter involve all "Female" patrol units, and account for 20% of the incidents (Table 3). By comparison, during the same quarter "Female" patrol units comprise only 8.7% of the patrol assignments and account for a mere 5.5% of the arrests made (Tables 1 & 2).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Within the restrictions imposed by a limited number of incidents and a relatively small study population, this study has sought to determine whether officer gender makes a difference in the response that police officers evoke from citizens. The premise of this study is that the number of incidents of police using physical force in their encounters with citizens is inversely related to the officer's ability to manage these encounters with non-physical tactics, to calm and defuse persons whom they are arresting or interacting with so that the use of physical force is minimized. This study has compared the proportion of incidents in which female officers are involved with that in which male officers are involved. With some exceptions, the data in this study tend to confirm most of the expectations about female officers suggested by previous studies.

Data from this research show that female officers not assigned with male partners tend to make proportionately fewer arrests than male officers. This finding is consistent with the results of some earlier studies.²³ This distinction between male and female officers appears to have

²³ Peter Bloch and Deborah Anderson, Policewomen on Patrol: The Final Report (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1974b), 3.

Lewis J. Sherman, "Evaluation of Policewomen on Patrol in a Suburban Police Department," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 3, no. 5, (1975): 434-438.

J.L. Sichel, L.N. Friedman, J.C. Quint, and M.E. Smith, Women on Patrol--A Pilot Study of Police Performance in New York City (New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 1978).

remained relatively constant over time. Some reasons why female officers have proportionately fewer arrests have already been discussed. However another plausible explanation may involve the fact that males tend to be more authoritarian²⁴ and therefore more concerned with the amount of respect afforded to them.

The demand for respect arises from the officers' uncertain authority, the public's resistance to it, and the tendency in the officers' minds to merge the office which they hold with their sense of self, or personal identity. Officers come to regard a citizen's challenge to their definition of the situation as a sign of disrespect not only for the law of which they are the representative, but for their person and the group with which they are so strongly identified. A new officer quickly learns that he or she must not back down but instead must attempt to control a situation, by force if necessary, or face severe informal sanctions by fellow officers, such as ostracism, negative labels, and unfavorable assignments.²⁵

Male officers demand deference and often perceive the lack of it as defiance. This attitude has been perceived by some citizens as an invitation to aggression.²⁶ Thus an encounter between a male officer and citizen who does not show deference is more likely to be seen by the officer as a challenge to his police authority. There is a greater likelihood that a male officer's response to such a

²⁴ Gary R. Perlstein, "Policewomen and Policemen: A Comparative Look," The Police Chief, Vol. 39, no. 4 (April 1972): 72-74, 83.

²⁵ Susan Ehrlich Martin, Breaking and Entering--Policewomen on Patrol (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980), 86.

²⁶ Catherine Milton, Women in Policing (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1972), 28.

challenge will be to assert his authority over the citizen. This posture may elicit a resistive or aggressive response from the citizen and escalate the confrontation to the point that the officer meets this challenge to his authority by arresting the citizen. Unlike the male police officer, the female officer, apparently, does not view conflict situations as personal confrontations that question her ability as a police officer.²⁷ Women police officers in most cases lack the need to project the "macho" image that seems to be inherent in the personality of most male officers.²⁸ Thus in most encounters between a female officer and a citizen, the female officer is not burdened with the need to repel perceived affronts to her authority. Also, the male officer represents a male authority figure, and gaining advantage of him in a physical encounter has been highly valued by some segments of society. While it may be heroic and masculine to attack a male officer, it has been cowardly to attack a woman, even if she was an officer.²⁹ Therefore the interaction between the female officer and the citizen is less likely to intensify into a situation that provokes resistance or assault and results in the citizen's arrest. This reasoning suggests the possibility that some of the arrests that male officers make

²⁷ Sean A. Grennan, "Findings on the Role of Officer Gender in Violent Encounters with Citizens," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 15, no. 1, (1987): 84.

²⁸ Sean A. Grennan, "Findings on the Role of Officer Gender in Violent Encounters with Citizens," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 15, no. 1, (1987): 84.

²⁹ Catherine Milton, Women in Policing (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1972), 28.

may be of questionable necessity; and that the reason female officers make fewer arrests is because their interactions with citizens are less likely to provoke the aggressive behavior that precipitates some arrests. For example, in responding to a family trouble call, one approach to managing the problem is for the officers to assess which of the participants is most responsible for causing the immediate crisis situation. The officers then advise this party to leave until things "cool off." If the offending party fails to leave of his own accord, he is then provoked into attempting to assault the officers, so that he can be arrested and removed from the situation. An alternative approach is for the officers to intervene by using verbal/negotiating skills to de-escalate tensions between the parties and to counsel them on how to peacefully resolve the immediate crisis. This approach regards making an arrest as a final option, which officers resort to only out of necessity when other interventions have been exhausted.

The results of this study seem to suggest that female officers working alone or with other female officers also tend to have minimal involvement in incidents. This finding lends support to the hypothesis that female officers have a greater tendency than male officers to evoke responses from citizens which defuse emotional situations and calm irate individuals. These results also are consistent with the findings of earlier studies which found that female officers

received fewer complaints³⁰ and were less likely to become involved in serious unbecoming conduct.³¹ However this sequence of minimal "Female" involvement for the first three quarters is interrupted by the data from the fourth quarter of 1990, when "Female" officers are involved in three of the fifteen incidents occurring during that period.

Unfortunately the limited scope and duration of this study prevents us from determining whether the fourth quarter data are an aberration or are indicative of an enduring change in female officer and citizen interactions.

The most interesting results of this study are the unexpected data on "Male/Female" police officer assignment combinations. Considering the previous discussion about female officers being less likely to provoke aggression, it does not seem unreasonable to expect that these "characteristics" of female officers would exert to some degree a calming influence on the interactions between citizens and male/female police officer teams. It would seem that the "calming" qualities of the female member of the pair would balance the more aggressive tendencies of male officer, resulting in fewer incidents for male/female teams. However the results of this study appear to contradict this line of reasoning. The data indicate that a disproportionately high number of arrests are made by

³⁰ Peter Bloch and Deborah Anderson, Policewomen on Patrol: The Final Report (Washington, D.C.: The Police Foundation, 1974b), 3.

³¹ H.W. Bartlett, and A. Rosenblum, Policewomen Effectiveness (Denver, Colorado: The Denver Civil Service Commission, 1977).

females and males when working together, and they have an exceptionally high rate of involvement in incidents. Proportionately they are involved to a much greater degree in arrests and incidents than are male units.

Previous studies conducted during the early years of policewomen involvement in patrol provide no comparable data on "Male/Female" units which might give some clues for explaining this phenomenon. However the analysis of one psychologist does provide some insights which may suggest an explanation for the high rate of incidents and arrests by "Male/Female" combinations. Joseph Balkin in his article "Why Policemen Don't Like Policewomen" discusses how the socialization process of some males can affect the male officer's perception of female officers and his attitude towards them.

Let us consider a boy who will one day become a policeman. He is severely disapproved of for not being "manly." Manliness is defined for him as involving strength, aggression, bravery, and superiority to females, especially in the area of work. Such a person is vulnerable to anxiety if he is not exhibiting these qualities--he is then not a man and others will disapprove of him. It is easy to see why something like police work would appeal to this person; it encourages him to exhibit the qualities that make him feel manly and thus maintain his security (that is avoid anxiety).

So he becomes a policeman and feels manly and good about himself. Enter the policewomen, on patrol. They do their work, perhaps not with equal strength, but with equal courage and competence. This would make the policeman feel

less manly, with the attendant anxiety and fear of disapproval, if he perceived accurately how the women performed.³²

Joseph Balkin goes on to explain that the policeman perceives policewomen inaccurately as a means of avoiding anxiety, and that it is easy for him to maintain this distorted view because many of the other male officers around him are maintaining it for the same reasons.

Used in the context of explaining the high rates of "Male/Female" arrests and incidents found in this study, Balkin's analysis suggests a rationale for this phenomenon. The policeman who is assigned with a female partner on a regular basis may find it increasingly difficult to maintain his distorted view of a female officer's capabilities. Working with her on a daily basis the male officer becomes acutely aware that she is as capable as he is in job performance. Recognition of this causes him to have anxiety. Therefore to avoid anxiety, the male officer performs his duties more zealously and aggressively in an effort to distinguish his performance from that of his female partner. He attempts to reassure himself that his toughness, courage, and competence are superior to hers. One of the ways he does this is by initiating and making more arrests, generally considered by the police community to be a significant measure of "good police work." His need to avoid anxiety and to feel good about himself may also

³² Joseph Balkin, "Why Policemen Don't Like Policewomen," The Journal of Police Science and Administration, 16, no. 1, (1988): 36.

cause the male officer to place increased emphasis on his "manly" qualities that differentiate him from his female partner. His concern with safeguarding his male identity may manifest itself in his more aggressive approach to handling situations and making arrests. He may also exhibit an overly protective attitude towards his "inferior" female partner which causes him to react more aggressively in defense of her against any citizen's affront to her authority as a police officer. Anxieties about his male sex role, which are intensified by working with a female partner, may evoke in the male officer, certain defensive behaviors designed to cope with his insecurities. These behaviors are more likely to trigger instances of resistance and belligerence from citizens, which result in his, and his female partner's, involvement in a greater number of incidents.

Supplementing the preceding explanation is the notion that the female officer when assigned with a male partner may also be inclined to act more aggressively than she does when working with another female officer. The supporting rationale for this theory is the knowledge that individuals tend to conform to the norms of their group because they want to be accepted by the group, and to avoid the group's disapproval. Because of some of the unique characteristics associated with police work, police officers tend to belong

³³ Susan Ehrlich Martin, Breaking and Entering--
Policewomen on Patrol (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980), 93-94.

to a cohesive, closed social group, with its own set of norms and sanctions. Within this group there is the expectation or norm that one officer will physically back up another officer. "The police officer who fails to come rapidly to the aid of fellow officers gets labeled "shaky" and is shunned as a partner because he or she cannot be relied on in a crisis situation." The officer who desires to gain the acceptance and approval of co-workers must demonstrate that when necessary, he or she is not afraid to engage in the use of physical force or to risk injury to one's self in doing so. Mindful of the male officer's doubts about her prowess in a physical confrontation, and not wishing to be labelled as cowardly, the female officer when assigned with an male officer, adapts accordingly by suppressing her "feminine" characteristics and by assuming a more aggressive posture. For example, if she and her male partner encounter a citizen with a hostile or uncooperative attitude, she will be less apt to employ verbal/negotiating skills to gain the citizen's compliance, and more prone to use physical coercion. By trying to live up to what she perceives as her male partner's expectations of what a good partner is, the female officer is attempting to win his and the other male officers' approval and to avoid rejection by them. Thus when assigned together, the policewoman's and her male partner's behaviors combine to elicit with greater

³⁴ Susan Ehrlich Martin, Breaking and Entering--
Policewomen on Patrol (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980), 86.

frequency the antagonistic and resistive reactions from citizens that are associated with incident involvement.

The preceding suppositions are posited as possible explanations for the higher proportion of arrests and incidents in which Male/Female combinations are involved. They are not to be considered as proven theories. Certainly there are other plausible explanations which have not been presented here. A thorough causal analysis of the relationship between the male/female combination and incidents is beyond the capacity of this limited research project. Such analysis is a matter for future research.

CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to test what was viewed as a relatively simple hypothesis, that female officers have a greater tendency than male officers to evoke a cooperative response from emotional citizens with whom they are interacting. This study's approach to testing the hypothesis was to compare each gender's rate of involvement in incidents where force was used. Officer gender is the independent variable, and frequency of incidents is the dependent variable. However, testing this hypothesis proved to be a more complex task than was initially anticipated.

First, most of the data needed for this research was gleaned by the tedious examination of written records and logs. Although the Flint Police Department has many of its records in a computer data base, accessing them using the data parameters relevant to this research was not feasible. Police department data bases are designed with parameters that reflect the statistical needs of the department, which may not necessarily be the same as those of a social science researcher. For example, officer gender is not a parameter specifically used by the Flint Police Department in its record keeping process relative to arrests, officer assignments, etc. It is also unlikely that it is used by other police departments because it has no relevance to the concerns of the political constituents of the governmental jurisdiction served by the police agency. Constituents and their elected officials are concerned with the types and

frequencies of crimes occurring in their community and how well their police department is doing in combating this crime. These concerns tend to focus police department attention on compiling statistical data about frequency and location of crime, as well as victim and suspect typology. Most police departments are also experiencing tighter budgets which place constraints on the allocation of manpower to collecting all but the most essential data. Even the FBI which regularly acquires data for its Uniform Crime Reports from local police agencies, does not prescribe a data category for officer gender. Other than to determine the total number of male and female officers employed by each reporting police agency, the FBI has no provisions for collecting data that would assist in determining the relative differences between the male and female officers.

Unless police departments incorporate these types of information into their records and data collection processes, continued research about police officer gender differences will be hampered by the difficulty in accessing useful data. At the present there appears to be little likelihood that police agencies will alter their information collection processes to accommodate the reporting of this type of data, because there is little incentive for them to do so.

Second, not all of the intervening and alternative variables that impinge upon the dependent variable were immediately evident during the drafting of this research

design. As the research progressed into its later stages, the relationships between the dependent variable and these other variables, as well as the attendant need to control for them became discernible. This necessitated collecting and analyzing additional data, and integrating it into the study. For example, the great extent to which female officers were unevenly apportioned by sector and shift assignments was not immediately recognized. Only after these data were collected and analyzed did this factor's potential to affect the dependent variable become apparent.

In conclusion, the limitations of this small study make the reliability its findings uncertain, and therefore any conclusions drawn from its data can only be regarded as tentative. This research effort does however at least suggest the possibility that the dynamics of male and female officers working together are worthy of further investigation. Replicating this research on a scale sufficiently large enough to provide reliable findings would be the first step necessary to validate whether or not male and female officers working together are involved in disproportionately more arrests and incidents. Reliable research findings that corroborate those found in this study could be the impetus for additional research to determine not only why the male/female team accounts for more incidents, but to develop information on other aspects of police behavior.

The implications that such research findings would have for criminal justice policy are sure to include a review of police officer hiring processes, training, and evaluation. For example, the selection of police officer applicants could reflect a more "feminine" approach to police work. In addition to the usual requirements, some novel criteria such as enhanced communication skills and social sensitivity could be used to select police applicants. Modifications in police training could emphasize the integration of physical and tactical skills with verbal and negotiating skills. Police officer training could utilize role playing as a tool to give officers experience and insight into typically encountered police/citizen scenarios. A critique of their behavior while role playing would assist officers in learning to de-escalate situations they frequently encounter on the street that have the potential for violence. Also policy changes may cause criminal justice administrators to re-evaluate the criteria that are used to rate the performance of police officers. A more equitable officer rating system that values verbal and social service skills as well as the usual police talents could help minimize sexual bias against policewomen, and enhance their status as police professionals.

APPENDIXES

NOTES TO APPENDIX A

The "1" "2" "3" and "4" at the top of the chart represent the four geographical sectors into which the Flint Police Department divides the city of Flint for the purpose of allocating patrol personnel. Each sector is subdivided into districts, to which individual patrol units are assigned.

The "R" indicates a "Relief" assignment which means that an officer scheduled for "relief" is not assigned to any particular district. Instead the relief officer's duty is to fill a vacancy in a district caused when the regularly assigned officer is absent due to sick leave, annual leave, etc.

The "D" stands for "Desk" assignment. Desk assignments are those non-patrol functions performed by uniform officers, such as radio dispatcher, the front patrol desk officer, crime prevention officer, etc.

The numbers in the rows following each month represent the number of female officers assigned to each sector. Each row totals 23 female officers, except for the last three months of 1990 which total 22 each, due to attrition.

The information in the above table was obtained from the Monthly Patrol Assignment Schedules of the Flint Police Department.

APPENDIX A

The Assignment of Policewomen by Shift and Sector in 1990

| | FIRST SHIFT | | | | | | SECOND SHIFT | | | | | | THIRD SHIFT | | | | | |
|-----|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | R | D | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | R | D | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | R | D |
| JAN | 2 | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 1 |
| FEB | 2 | | 2 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3 | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| MAR | 1 | | 2 | 2 | | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| APR | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 1 |
| MAY | 3 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 3 | | | 3 | | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| JUN | 2 | | 3 | | | 3 | | 1 | 3 | | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| JUL | 1 | | 2 | | 2 | 3 | | 1 | 3 | | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| AUG | 2 | | 3 | | 1 | 3 | | | 3 | | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| SEP | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | 3 | | | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| OCT | 2 | 1 | 3 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| NOV | 4 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | 1 | 2 |
| DEC | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | 1 | | | | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | | | 3 |

APPENDIX B

Reported Patrol Incidents Occurring in 1990

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Gender</u> | <u>Nature of Call & Arrests</u> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1-7 | M/M | OUIL Arrest--Resist |
| 1-19 | M/M | Spouse Abuse--Resist |
| 1-20 | M/M | People Fighting--APO |
| 1-21 | M/M | Cutting Call--Interfering, APO |
| 1-23 | M/M | Traffic Stop--Interfering, Resist |
| 1-25 | M/M | Felonious Assault arrest--Resist |
| 1-29 | M/F | Spouse Abuse--Resist |
| 2-4 | M/F | Felonious Assault--Resist, APO |
| 2-13 | M/F | Drunk passed out in a car--Resist |
| 2-13 | M/M | People Fighting--Resist |
| 2-17 | M/M | Transporting OUIL arrest--Resist |
| 2-25 | M/M | Family Fight--APO |
| 2-25 | M/F, M/M, M | Woman with a Knife--APO |
| 3-1 | M/F, M/M, M/M | Check Drug Dealing--Resist |
| 3-4 | M/M, M/M | Burglary--Resist |
| 3-9 | M/M, M/M | Trouble with X-Boyfriend--Resist, APO |
| 3-10 | M/M, M/F | Spouse Abuse--Resist |
| 4-2 | M/F | Trouble with a Man--Resist |
| 4-3 | M/F | Spouse Abuse--Resist |
| 4-11 | M/M | People Fighting--Resist |
| 4-13 | M/F, M/M | Family Trouble--APO, Resist |
| 4-18 | M/M | Stabbing call--Interfering w/Police |
| 4-20 | M/M | People Fighting--Resist |
| 4-21 | M/M, M/F | Burglary in Progress--Resist |
| 4-21 | M/M | Carrying a Concealed Weapon--Resist |
| 5-5 | M/F | Fight, Man with a Knife--Resist |
| 5-17 | M/M | Spouse Abuse--Resist |
| 5-22 | M/M | Trouble w/ Man--MDOP, Resist |
| 5-30 | M/M | Traffic Accident, Fight--APO, Resist |
| 5-31 | M/M | Disturbing the Peace--APO, Resist |
| 6-8 | M/M | Trouble w/ Man--Resist |
| 7-1 | M/M | Shots fired--Spouse Abuse, Resist |
| 7-3 | M/M, M/M | Family Fight--Resist |
| 7-4 | M/M | Traffic Stop--APO, Resist |

Note: The first column indicates the date that the incident occurred. The second column displays the gender assignment combinations of the patrol units involved. The third column contains a brief description of the call or field inquiry that precipitated the incident and the resulting arrest charges.

Abbreviations used: APO--Assaulting a Police Officer, Resist--Resisting Arrest, OUIL--Operating a vehicle under the influence of liquor, CCW--Carrying a Concealed Weapon, MDOP--Malicious Destruction of Property.

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Gender</u> | <u>Nature of Call & Arrests</u> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| 7-7 | M/M, M/M, M/M | Crowd Fighting--APO |
| 7-15 | M/M, M | Man w/ Gun--Interfering w/Police |
| 7-21 | M/M | OUIL arrest--APO |
| 7-29 | M/M | Family Fight--Interfering w/Police |
| 7-29 | M/F, M/M, M/M | Neighborhood Dispute--Interfering |
| 8-2 | M/F, M/M | Family Fight--Assault, Resist |
| 8-4 | M/F, F | Traffic Accident, Fight--APO, Resist |
| 8-5 | M/M | Family Fight--Interfering w/Police |
| 8-5 | M/M | OUIL arrest--Resist |
| 8-7 | M/M | Stolen car chase--APO, Resist |
| 8-9 | M/M | Traffic Stop arrest--APO, Resist |
| 8-10 | M/M | Traffic Accident--APO |
| 8-11 | M/F | Traffic Accident--OUIL arrest, APO |
| 8-12 | M/M | Man Beating a Woman--A&B, APO |
| 8-14 | M/F, M/M | Neighborhood Fight--Resist |
| 8-19 | M/M | Woman w/ Knife--Felonious Asslt |
| 9-3 | M/M | Fighting--Disturb Peace, APO |
| 9-5 | M/M, M/M | Car Chase--Open intoxicants, Resist |
| 9-8 | M/F | Spouse Abuse--APO, Resist |
| 9-10 | M | Two Women Fighting--Resist |
| 9-12 | M/M, M/M | Man Beating Woman--Interfering |
| 9-18 | M/M | Family Fight--Resist |
| 9-22 | M/M | Police Chase Stolen Car--Resist |
| 9-23 | M/M | Trouble w/ Man in Bar--Resist, APO |
| 9-27 | M, M/F | Larceny From Auto arrest--APO |
| 9-28 | M/M | Destruct of Property at Bar--APO |
| 10-1 | M/M | Check Youth Gambling--APO |
| 10-6 | F/F | Attempt Car Theft--APO, Resist |
| 10-6 | M/M | Chase Suspect w/Warrants--APO, Resist |
| 10-9 | M/M | Standby while wife leaves--APO |
| 10-13 | M/F, M | Trouble w/Man at Bar--Resist |
| 10-13 | M/M | Attempt Burglary--Resist |
| 10-20 | M/M | Assist security--Resist, Interfering |
| 10-26 | M/F | Burlary in Progress--Resist, APO |
| 10-31 | M/M | Reckless Driving arrest |
| 11-18 | F, F/F | Drive-By Shooting Suspect arrest--CCW |
| 11-18 | M/M | Chase Burglary Suspect--Resist |
| 12-10 | M/M | Transport Traffic Arrest--Resist |
| 12-12 | F/F | Spouse Abuse--Resist, APO |
| 12-21 | F/F, M | Spouse Abuse--APO |
| 12-30 | M/M | Family Fight--APO |

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